EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE TENNESSEE SANTA ARRESTEE STUDY, 1995-1996

Conducted by the Community Health Research Group, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville for the Tennessee Department of Health, Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services

Background of Tennessee's SANTA Study

- Tennessee is conducting a federally funded family of studies to estimate the statewide need for substance abuse treatment. Data from these studies will support Tennessee's annual State Treatment Needs Assessment Program (STNAP) block grant application for federal funds to support substance abuse initiatives within the state. This report analyzes the results from one of these studies, the Substance Abuse Need for Treatment among Arrestees (SANTA) study. We examine patterns of alcohol and drug use, abuse, and dependence and the prevalence of need for substance abuse treatment among newly arrested persons in Tennessee.
- Substantial research has documented a strong link between the use of alcohol and illicit drugs and criminal behavior. Arrested and imprisoned persons are much more likely than the general population to use, abuse, or be dependent upon alcohol and other drugs. Determining the need for substance abuse treatment in these populations and planning to meet that need is a particularly important aspect of substance abuse treatment policy.

The Relationship between Criminality and Substance Use, Abuse, and Dependence

- Criminologists believe that a variety of mechanisms link criminal behavior and substance use, abuse, and dependence:
 - 1. Substance use itself is often a criminal act.
 - Persons who are incapacitated either temporarily or for an extended period by their substance use are much more likely than other persons to break the law.
 - 3. Substance use may create psychological states that predispose the user to criminal behavior.
 - 4. Career criminals often use these properties of different substances to prepare themselves for committing crimes.
 - 5. Substance use is a pervasive part of the subculture which criminals inhabit.
 - 6. Those who are dependent on or abusing illicit substances often commit predatory crimes, such as robbery, burglary, theft, and fraud, to finance purchases of the substances they use.